

Message Text

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70

ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 NEA-10 ISO-00 AF-08 ARA-06 EUR-12

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAB-01 (ISO) W

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FM USMISSION USUN NY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8852

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY OSLO

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 3428

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UN, RQ

SUBJECT: UN COMMITTEE OF 24 (C-24) AND PUERTO RICO:

STATE OF PLAY

1. ON AUGUST 23, AUSTRALIAN MISOFF FORRESTER DISCUSSED PUERTO RICO AND THE COMMITTEE OF 24 WITH MISOFF. FORRESTER ESTIMATES THE C-24 WILL BEGIN CONSIDERATION OF PUERTO RICO DURING THE WEEK OF AUGUST 30. HE SAID THAT A NUMBER OF C-24 DELEGATIONS (UNSPECIFIED) HAVE SUGGESTED A "MINIMAL" RESOLUTION INSTEAD OF POSTPONEMENT, WHICH THEY SEE AS ONLY A TEMPORARY SOLUTION. SUCH A MINIMAL RESOLUTION WOULD INCLUDE A PREAMBULAR PARA REFERRING TO GA RESOLUTION 1514, A SECOND PREAMBULAR PARA REFERRING TO THE NOVEMBER ELECTIONS IN PUERTO RICO AND A SINGLE OPERATIVE PARA IN WHICH THE C-24 WOULD DECIDE TO KEEP THE QUESTION OF PUERTO RICO UNDER REVIEW.

2. FORRESTER SAID THAT SUCH A RESOLUTION WOULD ONLY BE USEFUL IF THE CUBANS TABLE A TOUGH RESOLUTION, ARE UNWILLING TO BACK OFF AT ALL AND IF IT IS CLEAR THAT A MOTION TO POSTPONE WOULD LOSE.

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3. IN RESPONSE TO FORRESTER'S QUERY ABOUT THE US

VIEW OF SUCH A RESOLUTION, MISSOFF REPLIED THAT WE CONTINUE TO ESTIMATE A THREE-VOTE MARGIN IN FAVOR OF POSTPONEMENT, PREFER POSTPONEMENT TO ANY RESOLUTION ON PUERTO RICO AND THAT HE DID NOT THINK THAT WE COULD ACQUIESCE IN ANY RESOLUTION ON PUERTO RICO. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT IT WAS CERTAINLY USEFUL TO CONSIDER HOW TO PROCEED IF POSTPONEMENT FAILS.

4. FORRESTER SAID THAT HE BELIEVES THE CUBANS AND SYRIANS WILL BE THE PRINCIPAL AGENTS OF THE DRAFT RESOLUTION ON PUERTO RICO AND THAT SYRIAN DEPUTY PERMREP TAHER AL-HUSSAMY HAD EMPHASIZED HIS DESIRE TO BE AS ACCOMMODATING AS POSSIBLE. FORRESTER POINTED OUT THE DANGER THAT SUCH ACCOMMODATION MAY PRESENT IN THAT A MILD RESTLUTION ON PUERTO RICO WOULD CARRY MUCH MORE EASILY THAN A TOUGH ONE. HE SAID IF MILD RESOLUTION SEEMED LIKELY, AUSTRALIA MIGHT BE FACED WITH HAVING TO ADOPT CONFRONTATIONAL TACTICS TO AVOID MAJORITY OF MEMBERS SEEING IT AS EASY WAY OUT.

5. FORRESTER INFORMED US THAT HE HAS RECEIVED CONDITIONAL AGREEMENT FROM THE MFA TO USE THE DRAFT TEXT (POUCHED TO SCHIELE, IO/UNP) ON PUERTO RICO IN THE C-24 DEBATE IF IT WOULD NOT FRIGHTEN OFF OR ANTAGONIZE SUPPORT FOR POSTPONEMENT, AND IF THE CUBANS TAKE A PARTICULARLY STRONG STAND. HE SAID THE MFA BELIEVES THAT ONLY ONE SUBSTANTIVE STATEMENT ON PUERTO RICO SHOULD BE MADE BY A WEO MEMBER OF THE C-24.

6. USUN CONTINUES TO BELIEVE THAT POSTPONEMENT OF CONSIDERATION OF ANY RESOLUTION ON PUERTO RICO IS THE MOST DESIRABLE OBTAINABLE ALTERNATIVE. WE STILL ESTIMATE THAT THERE WILL BE A THREE-VOTE MARGIN IN FAVOR OF POSTPONEMENT, ALTHOUGH HOW PEOPLE WILL LINE UP ON POSTPONEMENT DEPENDS TO SOME EXTENT ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THE RESOLUTION. THE SUBSTANCE WILL ONLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE AT THE RELATIVELY EXTREME LIMITS OF THE SPECTRUM AND ONLY IN A

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SMALL NUMBER OF CASES. (A VERY GENTLE "PROCEDURAL" RESOLUTION COULD COST SOME VOTES FOR POSTPONEMENT, AND A VERY TOUGH SUBSTANTIVE RESOLUTION MIGHT WIN A FEW VOTES FOR POSTPONEMENT.) IF POSTPONEMENT WERE TO FAIL, OR APPEAR DOOMED TO CERTAIN FAILURE, THEN SOME MINIMAL RESOLUTION, ALONG THE LINES WHICH FORRESTER DISCUSSED, WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO OPPOSE BUT WOULD ALSO BE LESS UN-PALATABLE TO US.

7. ACTION REQUESTED: WE WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S
REACTION TO THE AUSTRALIAN DRAFT TEXT.
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